

8 September 2014

SHILLONG: A church body has arranged for a public meeting at the Durbar Hall of Mission Compound here on September 11 to seek repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958, which is operational particularly in Manipur and Kashmir, as an expression of solidarity with all those who are for repealing of the "draconian act".

"A letter will be addressed and sent to the Prime Minister, home, law and DONER ministers to bring a Bill in the next session of Parliament for repealing AFSPA as military law and rule cannot co-exist side by side and put democratic functioning of governance on the backburner," church leader P B M Basaiawmoit said.

Citing the anti-AFSPA struggle by Irom Sharmila, he said that in August 2004, the executive committee of the National Council of Churches in India had written to the then President and PM to have the Act repealed. "Its Peoples' Forum Pre-Assembly and Quadrennial Assembly held in Bangalore in April 2012, had passed resolutions to the effect," he said.

"In 2005, the Justice Jeevan Reddy Commission of Enquiry had recommended that AFSPA be repealed and so did the UN special rapporteur on Human Rights, not once but twice. Many eminent persons had said that such a law, similar to military rule, has no place in a democracy. However, all this has fallen on deaf ears," the release read, adding that simultaneous public meetings would be held in the northeast to urge the Centre to repeal AFSPA .

"Almost all states in the northeast come under this Act, including parts of Meghalaya. In most of these cases, it is the innocent and ordinary citizen who faces the music. Lives have been lost, women raped. It happened earlier in Mizoram and Nagaland and the problem is very acute in Manipur today," said the church leader.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/City/Guwahati/Church-body-calls-for-anti-AFSPA-meet/article-show/41963172.cms>